
SENATE BILL 6148

State of Washington

60th Legislature

2007 Regular Session

By Senator Benton

Read first time 03/08/2007. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to the establishment of collaborative life science
2 learning centers; adding new sections to chapter 28A.300 RCW; creating
3 a new section; and making appropriations.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes it is critically
6 important for Washingtonians to invest in life science learning centers
7 in order to move Washington forward and maintain the state's position
8 as a world leader in the industries dependent on higher levels of life
9 science research and learning.

10 The legislature finds that it is critical to support new and
11 growing sectors of our economy such as the life sciences and lay a
12 foundation that will help the private sector to succeed. It is
13 important to stimulate interest in the life science fields, to improve
14 workers' skills and articulate life science learning with all levels of
15 public education, the community, and other state agencies that can
16 connect the learning with economic development.

17 The legislature further finds that it is critical to provide skills
18 for the state's citizens in the changing economy by providing learning
19 opportunities at the community level for more people. Traditional

1 funding levels should be enhanced, accelerated construction and
2 operation of life science learning must occur, and knowledge transfer
3 must be involved.

4 It is important for Washington, as part of its strategy to fulfill
5 a life sciences vision to assure Washington's citizens and companies
6 are uniquely positioned as world leaders in the life sciences, to stir
7 the minds of our childrens' interest in life sciences. It is also
8 important to provide first-hand hands-on instruction, and stimulating
9 community-based learning opportunities that steer young people into the
10 life sciences employment fields.

11 Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature to develop and fund
12 the construction and operation of life science learning centers in
13 strategic communities in Washington state. These centers, like current
14 education skill centers, must be community-based and demonstrate
15 multiple local partnerships, including local public school districts
16 and community colleges, to assure community connectedness. These
17 centers must also offer geographic and natural resource uniqueness to
18 assure that the physical locations of these centers foster educational
19 opportunities and stimulation. It is also necessary to provide an
20 articulated education program at life science learning centers that
21 will include the educational interaction between students of all ages
22 with each other and with established life science professionals to
23 assure the transfer of knowledge, the encouragement of younger people
24 to enter life sciences fields, as well as networking and mentoring.
25 Special consideration should be given to communities that also have a
26 four-year public institution of higher education that has an emphasis
27 on life sciences, natural sciences, or both.

28 The legislature furthermore declares that life science learning
29 centers should receive unique and enriched capital and operational
30 funds.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
32 RCW to read as follows:

33 (1) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, in
34 consultation with the department of community, trade, and economic
35 development, shall establish a competitive process to solicit proposals
36 for and prioritize collaborative life science learning center capital

1 projects for potential funding in the state capital budget. The office
2 of the superintendent of public instruction shall adopt rules governing
3 project eligibility and evaluation criteria.

4 (2) Application for funding of specific projects may be made to the
5 office of the superintendent of public instruction by collaborative
6 partnerships formed to deliver life science educational programs. Such
7 partnerships must include at least one public school district. Other
8 partnering entities may include, but are not limited to, local
9 governments, state natural resource agencies, community colleges,
10 nonprofit corporations, tribal governments, and other entities, as
11 determined by the office of the superintendent of public instruction.

12 (3) The office of the superintendent of public instruction, with
13 the advice of leaders in life sciences fields, including but not
14 limited to representatives from state natural resource agencies,
15 private business, public community and technical colleges, as well as
16 public baccalaureate institutions, shall establish and submit a
17 prioritized list of life science learning center capital projects to
18 the governor and the legislature in the office of the superintendent of
19 public instruction's biennial capital budget request beginning with the
20 2009-2011 biennium, and each biennium thereafter. The list shall
21 include a description of each project, proposed life science
22 curriculum, start-up and ongoing operational costs, and the amount of
23 recommended state capital budget funding. The prioritized list shall
24 be developed through open and public meetings.

25 (4) After the legislature has approved a specific list of projects,
26 the department of community, trade, and economic development shall
27 develop and manage appropriate contracts with the selected applicants.
28 The department shall not sign contracts or otherwise financially
29 obligate funds under this section until the legislature has approved a
30 specific list of projects.

31 (5) In contracts for grants authorized under this section, the
32 department of community, trade, and economic development shall include
33 provisions requiring that capital improvements be held by the grantee
34 for a specified period of time appropriate to the amount of the grant
35 and that facilities be used for the express purpose of the grant. If
36 the grantee is found to be out of compliance with provisions of the
37 contract, the grantee shall repay to the state general fund the

1 principal amount of the grant plus interest calculated at the rate of
2 interest on state of Washington general obligation bonds issued most
3 closely to the date of authorization of the grant.

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.300
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 The state of Washington shall fund collaborative life science
7 learning centers using an enhanced education operating formula, similar
8 to that of skill centers under the public K-12 school system.
9 Operational funding shall flow through the office of the superintendent
10 of public instruction to the participating local school districts.
11 Other participating state natural resource agencies, public community
12 and technical colleges, and universities are also eligible to receive
13 operational funding to nurture their active participation. Part of
14 this funding shall also provide for participation in the administrative
15 operations of these life science learning centers by community-based
16 nonprofit partners.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The sum of thirteen million two hundred
18 ninety thousand dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is
19 appropriated for the biennium ending June 30, 2009, from the state
20 building construction account to the office of the superintendent of
21 public instruction for the construction of the Columbia Springs
22 environmental education center located in Vancouver, Washington.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The sum of eighteen thousand seven hundred
24 fifty dollars, or as much thereof as may be necessary, is appropriated
25 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2007, from the general fund to the
26 office of the superintendent of public instruction for operational
27 expenses of the Columbia Springs environmental education center located
28 in Vancouver, Washington. It is the intent of the legislature that
29 enhanced operational funding will be made available upon completion of
30 the project.

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